



JIM GIBBONS
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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KENNETH E. MAYER
Director

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Deputy Director

December 2, 2009

Mr. Gene Seidlitz
Winnemucca Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
5100 Winnemucca Boulevard
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

Re: EA-W030-2010-001 Calico Mountain Complex

Dear Gene:

The Nevada Department of Wildlife has reviewed the pending environmental assessment to gather wild horses throughout the Calico Mountain Complex. We appreciate the approach to combine herd management areas to best manage these adjoining herds that may expand into other Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management. Data collected on these herds are often distorted due to the nature of these free roaming wild horses and burros that can affect the welfare of fish and wildlife habitats.

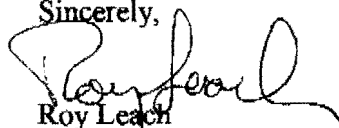
Population modeling and census data supports much of what the Bureau of Land Management assessments have presented to the National Advisory Board in recent years. Due to the actual numbers observed in the March 2008 surveys, the Department finds a unique opportunity in this gather to ground truth the population model and assess the affects of fertility treatments in the Proposed Action. Additional monitoring studies and census flights will have to be amended to the proposed Monitoring Plan to correct the present situation.

In recent history, our agencies observed similar wild horse and burro populations in the Calico Complex prior to the severe winter of 1992-1993. Emergency gathers were conducted by the Field Office in an attempt to achieve appropriate management levels and to rescue stress animals from a major die off. Wildlife big game species suffered a 30% die off in the Warm Springs Pasture of the Solider Meadows Allotment during the early months of 1993. Data now suggests the drought conditions that have persisted over the past four years, and excessive ungulate use of these lands, have set the stage for another major event in the foreseeable future.

12/04/2009 10:34 AM

Mr. Gene Seidlitz
December 2, 2009
Page 2

We support the proposed gathers in the best interest of the potential threat to animals and their habitat. If there is a need for additional input or consultation, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Roy Leach
Western Region

cc. Ed Partee
Chris Hampson
Steve Siegel